

THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
TRINITY,

Proved from Scripture and Reason;

AND,

A Candid Enquiry

Into the DOCTRINES of

P R E D E S T I N A T I O N

AND

E L E C T I O N.

By a L A Y M A N.

N E W C A S T L E :

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The P R E F A C E.

I Have a long Time been of Opinion, that the Athanasian Doctrine was erroneous, but never reduced my Sentiments upon it into Writing till the Year 1764, that the Rev. Mr Ingham (the Head of a Sect of Methodists in Yorkshire) published a Book upon the Trinity; which Book being delivered to me for my Opinion, by a Methodist Minister officiating under that Gentleman, I shortly after returned him my Answer in a Letter, containing the Purport of the following Discourse: But having greatly contracted my Sentiments to bring them within the Compass of an ordinary Epistle, I afterwards, to explain myself more fully, drew out my Thoughts in the following Treatise, intending this Work, and so much of the Dedication as relates to it, should not be published till after my Death, that an old Layman, labouring under great Infirmities, might avoid being persecu-

ted with a Paper War by any of the bigotted Clergy.

But being lately informed that several learned Gentlemen have, since I wrote the above Letter, had Virtue and Resolution enough publicly to oppose the Athanasian Doctrine; their laudable Behaviour hath encouraged me to publish this Tract at the same Time that I publish another little Book explaining the Doctrine of Predestination and Election.

I know not what Proofs taken from Scripture, or what Arguments deduced from Reason, these eminent Writers have made Use of to support the Tenets they hold, having never perused any of their several Performances. I hope however such of them as are still living will not despise the Labours of a Fellow Christian attached to the same Cause, and one to whom it would give great Pleasure to find his Sentiments coincide with theirs.



The DEDICATION.

To their GRACES the ARCH-
BISHOPS of CANTERBURY
and YORK, and to the Rest
of the Right Reverend my
Lords the BISHOPS of Great
Britain.

My LORDS,

IT is impossible I should be under
any Difficulty to whom to address
the following Sheets. Your Lordships
great Knowledge in the holy Scrip-
tures, and exemplary Zeal in promo-
ting true Religion, must necessarily
determine my Choice. And as I
have treated a fundamental Article of
the Christian Faith in a Manner
different from many other Authors,
where could I find Patrons so able
to defend my Doctrine, if true, or so
able

able to confute it, if false, as your Lordships?

Your Lordships must be sensible it is the Duty of every Clergyman, but in a more peculiar Manner the Duty and Province of your Lordships, to regulate our Faith, as well as to reform our Morals. A Heathen Philosopher may do the one, but a Christian Divine alone is able to do the other.

I have delivered my Sentiments upon the Subjects here treated of with the strictest Regard to Truth, according to the best of my own Judgment. But as I am very far from thinking myself infallible, with great Submission I humbly intreat your Lordships to take what I have written into your most serious Consideration; and by the Result of your Lordships superior Judgment,

ment, let the World know, whether the Doctrine of St Athanasius, or the Doctrine I advance, is better authorised by Scripture, that Christians may no longer live in Ignorance or Error, or have any Doubts or Scruples in a Matter of this great Importance.

As this Tract is attended with another little Treatise concerning Predestination and Election, wherein are laid down some Rules for expounding the holy Scriptures, I would therefore also beg Leave to recommend the Perusal and Patronage of that Book to your Lordships, and most humbly request your Lordships would be so good as let the World know whether my Doctrine contained therein, and my Method prescribed thereby for expounding the Scriptures, is true, or false; that neither myself, nor any
other

other well-disposed Christian, may labour under any Doubt or Uncertainty in those Particulars.

As both these little Books were written with an Intent to establish Truth, I flatter myself with the Hopes that your Lordships great Goodness will excuse the Liberty here taken in recommending them to your Lordships Protection; assuring your Lordships, that I have the highest Veneration for your Lordships sacred Function, and that I am, with the profoundest Respect,

My LORDS,

Your Lordships most obedient

Humble Servant,

MIDDLEHAM,

Oct. 7. 1767.

FRA. GROSEFIELD.



THE
Doctrine of the Trinity
PROVED FROM
SCRIPTURE and REASON.

THE Doctrine of the Trinity hath for many Centuries been so little understood, that all Denominations of Christians have looked upon it as incomprehensible.

Whether this may be imputed to the many Absurdities, Improbabilities, and Errors in the Athanasian Creed, and the Establishment of that Creed in the Church of Rome, and other Christian Churches; or whether the dreadful Anathema therein denounced against all who do not believe it, hath intimidated Mankind from scrutinizing into this mysterious Doctrine, is not

my present Purpose to enquire into. Neither is it the Intent of this present Work to expose every Error in that Creed, as such a Task would enlarge this Discourse beyond its intended Brevity; the sole Intention of the following Sheets being only to prove the Doctrine of the Trinity from many Passages in Scripture, and many Arguments deduced from Reason, in a different Way from what Athanasius would have Mankind to *believe*, and leave the impartial World to compare the Doctrine of Athanasius with the following Doctrine, that every Man may be able to judge for himself which of them is most authentic and true, to the End that no Man may hereafter labour under the Bondage of Doubt, Ignorance, or Error, concerning this important Article of the Christian Faith.

This is a Task so easy to be performed by a moderate Attention to the Holy Scriptures, assisted by a little Consideration, and Judgment, that it is Matter of great Amazement that so few pious and learned Doctors of the reformed Religion have ever



ever set about so laudable an Undertaking. Surely neither the Dread of the Athanasian Anathema or the Apprehension of being thought uncanonically Heterodox, could ever be of Weight enough to over-balance the great Consolation such Persons must have found in doing their Duty to God, and their Fellow Christians, by extricating them out of Obscurity and Error, and leading them into the Paths of Light and Truth.

But since so few able Pens have hitherto taken the Trouble to investigate this Doctrine, it shall be the Business of the following Pages to explain this hitherto incomprehensible Article of Faith, and to make it capable of being understood by every common Capacity. In order to do this, little more is necessary than to comment upon, and expound two or three obscure Passages in the Holy Scriptures.

The first Passage intended to be commented upon and expounded, is the first Part of the first Chapter of the Gospel of St John, where the Apostle being about to give a Description of our blessed Saviour,

begins his Discourse with the following Words :

JOHN i. 1. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

In order to explain this Verse, it is necessary in the first Place to consider, what St John meant by, *in the Beginning*; and, 2dly, what he meant by, *the Word*.

By *in the Beginning* he could not mean Eternity, or from all Eternity, because Eternity hath no Beginning; therefore the most natural Construction of these Words is to understand them in the same Sense all Men understand the same Words in the first Chapter of Genesis, where they mean no more than that Period of Time when God began to create the World; and for that Reason it appears most natural to conclude, that the Apostle, by these Words, must either mean that Period of Time when God created the World, or some other Era or Period of Time when the Almighty pronounced some other Fiat, Word, or Decree :

And

And that by these Words, *In the Beginning*, the Apostle did not mean that Period of Time when the Almighty pronounced his Fiat for the Creation, is self-evident, as the Evangelist was here treating upon a different Subject, consequently he must mean some other Period of Time, when the Supreme Being pronounced some other Fiat, Order, or Decree, productive of some other important Event.

2dly, Let us consider what St John can most naturally be supposed to mean by, *the Word*.

It is apprehended, that all the Trinitarians affirm, that the Apostle made Use of this Expression to signify Jesus Christ; but that he actually did so, or what Reason he had for so doing, none of them, it is believed, are able to give any good Account, as neither St John himself, nor any other inspired Writer, declare any such Thing. If he meant Jesus Christ, why did he call him *the Word*? And make Use of an Expression which does not convey any adequate Idea of his kind Master, by whom he was

so greatly beloved, when he might with equal Ease, and much greater Propriety, have described him with many Words or Expressions which would have conveyed a more exalted Idea of the great Worth and Dignity of this sacred Person, capable of being understood by all his Readers: Therefore we must look out for some other Construction of that Expression more agreeable to Scripture, to common Sense, and the Subject the Apostle was writing upon.

Perhaps the present Trinitarians may say, If this was not the Apostle's Meaning, what then could he mean by these Expressions? To which it may very readily, and, it is believed, with great Justice, be answered, that the Apostle's Meaning was this: That in the Beginning, or soon after the Creation, when Man unhappily fell, God the Father, out of his abundant Mercy and Compassion towards his then lost, and miserable Creatures, most bountifully promised, that a Redeemer should be given them, and that that Promise, Fiat, or Decree of the Almighty, is by St John called the *Word* which was with God, and was God. It was with God

as being his Will, and it was God, or the Word of God, as he himself pronounced it.

These Gentlemen may also say, if this Hypothesis be true, Christ could not have any Existence before his Incarnation. To which it may with great Truth be answered, that Christ certainly did not exist in the Flesh before his Incarnation. Neither does it appear by any of the sacred Writings, that his Godhead existed any where, save in the Bosom, or Person of God the Father, not as a third Person in the Trinity, but as then being of the same Substance with the Godhead of the Father, before his Incarnation; but at the Time of his Incarnation, the Almighty communicated a divine Spirit to his Son, who then partaking of the Godhead or Divinity of his Father, and also of the Humanity, or Carnality of his Mother, became God and Man, a compleat Redeemer, and the second Person in the Trinity, and was thereby enabled to satisfy the Justice of God by fulfilling the Law for us, and to die as a Sacrifice for Sin.

And

And as no Part of the Old Testament speaks of a Trinity in the Godhead, nor doth the New Testament mention any such Thing till after the Incarnation of our blessed Saviour, and as the Prophets whenever they mention the Advent, Divinity, or Majesty of the Messiah, always speak in the future Tense: For Instance, Isaiah ix. 6. "A Child is born, unto us a Son is given," "and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder; and his Name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counsellour, the mighty God, "the everlasting Father, the Prince of "Peace, &c." These Things are not only strong, but certainly ought to be considered as evident Proofs of what hath been already advanced.

When the Prophets speak of any Thing promised or decreed by God, which is to happen, it is usual for them to use the present, instead of the future, Tense, as if the same was actually fulfilled, as in this Case, "A Child is born." But it must be observed, that all the Rest of this Verse is in the Future.

V. 3. *All Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made that was made.*

In this Verse, St John acquaints us with the Power of the *Word*, or Fiat of the Almighty: "All Things were made by him." And also ascribes Personality to the *Word*, and means that all Things were made by God the Father, or by his Fiat, or *Word*.

V. 4. *In him was the Life, and the Life was the Light of Men.*

Here, and not till now, the Apostle speaks of Jesus Christ, and with great Truth and Propriety stiles him the Light of Men: "In him was the Life." That is, in God was once the Life of all Creatures, and the Life and divine Spirit of our blessed Saviour was once in God, or in other Words he had his Existence from God, or by his Fiat, or Word: And then he justly tells us, that Christ was the Light of Men.

V. 10.

V. 10. *He was in the World, and the World was made by him, and the World knew him not.*

St John, who before had spoken of the Word, or Promise of a Redeemer, and told us he had his Existence from God: In this Verse, he speaks of Christ incarnate, "He was in the World." That is, the Promise of a Redeemer was fulfilled, who had been sent into the World to fulfil the Will of his Father, and as he not only partook of the Divinity of the Father when he was in the World, but had the Fulness of the Godhead bestowed upon him after his Death, at which Time this Gospel was written; therefore, our Saviour might here, without any Impropriety of Speech, be said to have made the World, (which Expression shall be more fully explained hereafter) and the Apostle might mention it here, not only to shew the Dignity of our Redeemer, but the Ingratitude and Infidelity of a corrupt World, which would not believe in him, by saying, that the World knew him not.

V. 14. *And the Word was made Flesh,
and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld
his Glory, the Glory as of the only begot-
ten Son of the Father, full of Grace
and Truth.*

The Apostle having told us in the former Verses, that God had promised a Redeemer, and that he was sent into the World: In this Verse he proceeds to acquaint us how, or in what Manner the Almighty created this new and wonderful Being of God and Man. He says, "the *Word* was made *Flesh*, and dwelt
" amongst us, and we beheld his *Glory*, the
" *Glory* of the only Begotten of the Father,
" full of *Grace* and *Truth*. Which is the
same Thing as if he had said: The *Word*,
or Promise of the Almighty was fulfilled
(for *Word*, and *Promise*, are in many Cases
synonymous Terms) by sending us a Re-
deemer who dwelt amongst us as Man, or as
the Apostle styles it, was made *Flesh*, pur-
suant to the Promise made by God to our
first Parents for their Consolation after their
shameful Transgression and Fall, in whose
Person he informs us, " we beheld the Glo-

" 17

“ry of the only begotten Son of the Father.” That is, the Glory or Godhead of the Father, he being both God and Man, and he directly gives this Reason for it, by telling us that our blessed Redeemer was full of Grace and Truth; that is, highly favoured and beloved by the Father, and so replete with the Divinity of the Father, that he was full of Truth, (i. e.) all the Doctrine he taught, and all the Miracles he wrought were true.

As the Apostle here styles our blessed Saviour the only Begotten of the Father, and tells us the Word was made Flesh, and we beheld his Glory, he doubtless must mean that when the Power of the Almighty overshadowed the blessed Virgin, the holy Thing which was to be born partook both of the Divinity of the Father, and the Humanity of the Mother, and so became both God and Man, and consequently a compleat Redeemer. And it would be Matter of great Surprize if any Person should have the Confidence to affirm, that the supreme Being was not as able to communicate a divine Spirit, or some Rays, or Part of his Godhead,

head, into the human Body of our blessed Saviour at the Time of his Incarnation, as he was to breathe an human Soul into the Body of the first Man.

Notwithstanding it must be admitted, that the Godhead of our blessed Saviour, when he dwelt amongst us, was co-eternal with the Godhead of God the Father; yet it cannot be admitted that his Godhead was at that Time co-equal with God the Father, for the Reasons herein-after-mentioned, although it might be co-equal with the Godhead of the Father after our Saviour's Death and Glorification, as St Paul tells the Colossians: "The Fulness of the Godhead" then dwelt in him bodily. Col. i. 19. and "again, c. ii. 9."

This Doctrine is fully confirmed by our blessed Saviour's own Words, Mark xiii. 32. which demonstrate that his Godhead, when in the Flesh, was not co-equal with God the Father. For upon his Apostles inquiring of him when the End of the World would be, he expressly told them: "That Day" and Hour knoweth no Man, no not the

“ Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father alone.” Which important Event must have been known to him as well as to the Father, had his Godhead at that Time been co-equal with the Father.

Besides when our blessed Saviour was expiring upon the Cross, he uttered this lamentable Exclamation: “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” Which doleful Expression of our dying Saviour gives great Reason to believe that God the Father had at that Time withdrawn his Divinity from him: And indeed, according to all the Rules of human Reason, it could not be otherwise; for it must be believed that Christ, as Man, could not be subject to the Power of Death till divested of his Godhead; but then we ought to believe that his Godhead was restored at, or before his Resurrection: Which Doctrine is abundantly confirmed by our Saviour himself, who tells us, John xiv. 10. “ I speak not of myself, but my Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works.” And in the 28th Verse of the same Chapter he says to his Disciples, “ My Father is
“ greater

"greater than I."—But after his Resurrection, and never before, he tells his Disciples, "That all Power was given unto him in Heaven, and in Earth." Matt. xxviii. 18.

It is needless in this Place to make any further Comments upon what St John hath told us in this Chapter, lest this Discourse should be protracted beyond its intended Limits by a Repetition of the same Arguments, which seem more properly to be made Use of in Answer to what St Paul hath more obscurely declared upon the same Subject, in his Epistles to the Colossians and Hebrews.*

We shall therefore now proceed to examine the Description given by St Paul of our blessed Saviour, and desire our Readers to apply the Comments made upon his Discourse, to such Part of St John's Doctrine as hath not hitherto been fully answered.

* See what Saint *Peter* saith concerning the Obscurity in some Things in Saint *Paul's* Epistles, and other Scriptures. 2 *Pet.* iii. 16.

In the first Chapter of St Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, after exhorting them to give Thanks unto God the Father for making them Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints, and delivering them from the Power of Darkness, and translating them into the Kingdom of his dear Son, he proceeds from the 14th to the 20th Verses to describe our blessed Saviour in the following Words:

“ In whom we have Redemption through
 “ his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sin;
 “ Who is the Image of the invisible God,
 “ the First-born of every Creature. For by
 “ him were all Things created that are in
 “ Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible
 “ and invisible, whether they be Thrones
 “ or Dominions, or Principalities or Powers;
 “ All Things were created by him, and for
 “ him. And he is before all Things, and
 “ by him all Things consist. And he is the
 “ Head of the Body the Church: Who is
 “ the Beginning, the First-born from the
 “ Dead, that in all Things he might have
 “ the Pre-eminence. For it pleased the Fa-
 “ ther that in him should all Fulness dwell.
 “ And

“ And (having made Peace through the
 “ Blood of his Cross) by him to reconcile
 “ all Things unto himself, by him, I say,
 “ whether they be Things in Earth, or
 “ Things in Heaven.”

Before these Verses are attempted to be explained, it is proper to premise that St Paul was not elected an Apostle till after our Saviour's Death, consequently that this, as well as all the Rest of his Epistles, were written after our Saviour's Death, and Glorification; and that St Paul, as well as St John, sometimes choose, and particularly in this Place St Paul chooses to describe our Saviour in the full Splendour of his Majesty, Power, and Glory, after he was glorified by the Father, and not in that lowly and humble State when he dwelt amongst us in the Flesh. And it is evident he was doing so here, because he speaks to the Colossians in the present Tense, telling them, “ Christ
 “ is the Image of the invisible God, the First-
 “ born of every Creature. The First-born
 “ from the Dead, &c.”

In expounding these Verses, it shall first be considered, why St Paul tells us that Christ is the Image of the invisible God, and the First-born of every Creature, and the First-born from the Dead: 2dly, Why Christ is said to have created all Things that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth: And, 3dly, Why he is said to be before all Things.

1st. To prove, in the first Place, what St Paul meant by saying that Christ is the Image of the invisible God, and the First-born of every Creature, and the First-born from the Dead: It must be observed, that the Apostle makes Use of the Word (born)* (or begotten) as a Metaphor in both these Places to signify different Things of a near Affinity to each other.

* The original Word will admit of either of these Constructions, and is translated differently in different Bibles. And both the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds have adopted the Word (begotten).

By

By saying, "that Christ was the First-born from the Dead," the Apostle undoubtedly meant, that Christ was the first who arose from the Dead: And by saying, "that Christ was the First-born of every Creature," no other Interpretation can be put upon these Words, to make them consistent with Scripture and Truth, but to explain St Paul's Meaning thus: That Christ was the first Person who after Death ascended into Heaven, and was glorified by the Father: And as a Demonstration that this was the Apostle's Meaning, he gives the following Reasons: First, "That in all Things he might have the Pre-eminence." And, 2dly, in the 19th Verse of this Chapter, and the 9th Verse of the following Chapter, the Apostle assigns this further Reason in these Words: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all the Fulness of the Godhead dwell." And as the Fulness of the Godhead then dwelt in Christ Jesus, it is not to be wondered that the Apostle should say, "He is the Image of the invisible God."

2dly.

2dly. Let us consider what the Apostle saith in the 16th and 17th Verses of this Chapter: "For by him were all Things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth." Undoubtedly the Apostle meant, that the same Godhead, or divine Power, which dwelt in our Saviour after his Glorification, created all Things in Heaven and Earth. And consequently such Godhead, or divine Power, must have existed before all Things, and that all Things must consist by it. Which is a full Answer to both the 2d and 3d Propositions.

In the 18th Verse the Apostle tells us, "Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church." This Expression hardly requires any Comment, since every Christian must not only know, but believe, that Christ is the supreme Head of all Christians, and that the Christian Religion was instituted by him.

And St Paul again, giving a Description of our blessed Saviour after his Resurrection and Glorification, in his Epistle to the Hebrews,

brews, advanceth the like Doctrine. For in the first Chapter to the Hebrews, and the 2d and 3d Verses, he hath these Words: " God appointed him Heir of all Things, " by whom also he made the Worlds. Who " being the Brightness of his Glory, and " the express Image of his Person, and up- " holding all Things by the Word of his " Power." Which is, that God having then invested his Son Jesus Christ with the Fulness of the Godhead, and thereby made him Heir of all Things, he had then not only the Brightness of the Glory of the Father, but was transformed into the express Image of the Father, and his Divinity being then equal with the Father, the Apostle's Meaning must be that the Worlds were made by the same Godhead and divine Power with which the Son was then invested. But to shew the Hebrews that the sole Power was once in God the Father, and that God the Father had conferred his Power unto the Son, he acquaints the Hebrews in the 8th Verse of this Chapter, what God the Father said concerning God the Son: " Thy " Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: " A Scepter of Righteousness is the Scepter " of

“ of thy Kingdom.” And God the Father is said to give this Reason for that Declaration, in the following Verse: “ Thou hast
 “ loved Righteousness, and hated Iniquity,
 “ therefore God, even thy God, hath
 “ anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness
 “ above thy Fellows.” Which Words can be understood in no other Sense than this: That because our blessed Saviour had fulfilled the Will of his Father, who is here stiled the God of our Saviour, to shew his Superiority to God the Son when he was Man, and dwelt amongst us; therefore the Father rewarded him with Glorification, or the Fulness of the Godhead, after his Death. And in the 5th Verse of the next Chapter, lest the Hebrews should mistake his Meaning, he tells them he is not speaking of this World, but the World to come. His Words are these: “ For unto the Angels hath he
 “ not put in Subjection, the World to come,
 “ whereof we speak.”

And more fully to explain his Meaning, he tells them in the subsequent Verses, “ That God made Christ a little lower than
 “ the Angels, and crowned him with Glory
 “ and

" and Honour, and set him over the Works
 " of his Hands. That God put all Things
 " in Subjection under his Feet. But now
 " we see not all Things put under him.
 " But we see Jesus who was made a little
 " lower than the Angels for the Suffering of
 " Death crowned with Glory and Honour,
 " that he by the Grace of God should taste
 " Death for every Man."

From which Expressions it may justly be
 concluded, that when St Paul says Christ
 made the Worlds, that he did not mean that
 Christ (who he tells the Hebrews was made
 a little lower than the Angels) was the ac-
 tual Creator of the Worlds, but that the
 Worlds were created by the same divine Spi-
 rit or Power with which Christ was invested
 after his Glorification. For should it be
 otherwise understood, St Paul would not
 only contradict himself, but all the other in-
 spired Writers, (as shall hereafter be shewn)
 which no Man can believe.

To prove which, let us attend to what St
 Paul himself saith in the 2d Chapter of his
 Epistle to the Philippians, and the 8th and
 9th

9th Verses, where, speaking of our blessed Saviour, he hath these Words: "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, [i.e. glorified him] and given him a Name which is above every Name." But if the Fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ from Eternity, or even before his Death, he could not have been exalted by the Father after his Death, as the Almighty could not make him greater than himself.

Again St Paul, speaking to the Corinthians concerning the Multiplicity of the Heathen Gods, Ch. viii. V. 6. saith, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things, and we by him;" i.e. One God who made all Things, and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom all Mankind were redeemed.

And in the 4th Chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, V. 6. St Paul avers there is only "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

And

And in his 1st Epistle to Timothy, Ch. ii. V. 5. he declares, " There is one God, and one " Mediator between God and Men, the " Man Christ Jesus;" whom, in the third Verse of this Chapter, the Apostle stiles God our Saviour, as a Mark of Distinction or Inferiority between God the Father, and God the Son.

Again, when St Paul is describing the Godhead of the Father and the Son, in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, Ch. xi. V. 3. he saith, " But I would have you know that " the Head of every Man is Christ, and the " Head of the Woman is the Man, and the " Head of Christ is God." Also, Ephesians i. 17. Paul prayeth, " That the God of " our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of " Glory, may give unto them the Spirit of " Wisdom, and Revelation in the Knowledge " of him."

In these Verses the Apostle teacheth us to believe that God the Father is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ; consequently that he was the Creator of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the Son was inferior to the Father

before his Glorification, which is also confirmed by what St Paul saith, Acts xvii. 22, 23, and 25, when preaching to the Athenians he hath these Words: "Ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all Things you are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your Devotions, I found an Altar with this Inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you. God that made the World, and all Things therein, seeing that he is the Lord of Heaven and Earth,—seeing he giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things." And in 1 Cor. xi. 12. St Paul saith that "all Things are of God." And in Hebrews iii. 4. St Paul saith, "He that built all Things is God." And in the first Chapter of Ephesians, V. 2d and 3d, he hath these Words: "Grace be unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." And again he saith to Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 13. "I give thee Charge in the Sight of God who quickeneth all Things, and before Jesus Christ who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good Confession." In which

Places

Places the Apostle makes a manifest Distinction between God the Father, and God the Son.

In all these last mentioned Texts St Paul plainly and expressly declares there is only one supreme Being, namely, God the Father, and that he created all Things: How then comes it to pass that the holy Apostle should tell the Colossians, that Jesus Christ created all Things? For it cannot be supposed that St Paul, who was an inspired Penman, should so palpably contradict himself?

The Reason must doubtless be this, that the Apostle when he wrote that Epistle, being instigated with an holy Zeal, and sublime Rapture, upon contemplating the transcendent Merits of our blessed Saviour, in redeeming fallen Man; he therefore, to give the most exalted Idea of our most gracious Redeemer, describes him in this Place after his Glorification and Ascension, and not only tells the Colossians in the 19th Verse of the first Chapter, but also in the 9th Verse of the subsequent Chapter,

“ That it pleased the Father that all the
 “ Fulness of the Godhead should dwell in
 “ him.” And if all the Fulness of the
 Godhead then dwelt in our blessed Saviour,
 it is no Wonder the Apostle should ascribe
 the Creation of all Things to him, or to
 the Godhead or Power with which he was
 then invested.

And the same Reason may be assigned for
 what St Paul saith to the Hebrews, when
 he tells them that God had appointed Christ
 Heir of all Things, by whom also he made
 the Worlds, &c. as quoted above: And that
 when he had purged out Sin, he sat down
 on the right Hand of the Majesty on High,
 being made much better than the Angels.

And St John, in the first Chapter of his
 Gospel, had undoubtedly the same Reason
 for saying that Christ created the World.

The Expositions here put upon St John's
 and Paul's Writings, make them not only
 consistent with themselves, but also with
 every other inspired Writer, which it is
 apprehended no other Exposition would be
 able

able to do, and which is impossible to be done by the Interpretations heretofore put upon their Works.

As a further Evidence, St Paul in the first Chapter to the Hebrews, and the tenth Verse, expressly tells us, and quotes the royal Psalmist for his Authority, "That the supreme Being in the Beginning laid the Foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens were the Work of his Hands." And in the same Epistle, Ch. ii. V. 9. tells the Hebrews, "That Jesus who was made a little lower than the Angels for the suffering of Death, was crowned with Glory, and Honour, that he by the Grace of God should taste Death for every Man;" which is also quoted above. From whence it is evident, that when the supreme Being made or created our blessed Redeemer, though God the Father gave him a sufficient Amplitude of his divine Spirit to enable him to fulfil the Law for us, and thereby to satisfy the Justice of God, yet as he was lower than the Angels till his Glorification, he could never be supposed to have made the Worlds, that being the

D 3

Work

Work of the great Creator only, as is testified by all the Prophets and Apostles who mention that Subject. For Instance, Moses tells us, Genesis i. 1. "In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth." And Exodus xx. 3. God himself declares, "Thou shalt have no other Gods bur me." From which it is evident, he was at that Time the sole and only God. And the like is to be found in many other Places in the Old Testament, wherein all the Prophets who prophesied of our Saviour either speak of him as promised by God, as in Gen. iii. 15. where God promised that the Woman's Seed shall bruise the Serpent's Head; or otherwise that he shall come or be sent by God, as is before observed, which was not accomplished till the Incarnation or Nativity of our blessed Saviour, as hath been already made fully appear; to confirm which our Saviour himself declares in the Gospel of St Luke, "That he received the holy Spirit from God. Luke iv. 18. And St John testifies the same. John iii. 34. And John the Baptist, speaking of Christ, hath these Words: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the Words of God: For God giveth

"giveth not the Spirit by Measure unto
"him."

When Christ appeared to his Disciples after his Resurrection, he came and spake unto them, saying, "All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth," as quoted before; which Power could be given by none but God the Father. And as it does not appear by any of the sacred Writers that that Power was given unto him before his Resurrection; it is therefore evident, that the Office of our Saviour before that Time, was to declare the Will of his Father, and to fulfil the Law for us, and to make an Atonement for Sin by his Death.

And our Saviour himself, speaking to the Jews, saith, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, is one Lord." Mark xii. 29. And our Saviour, speaking to his Disciples a little before his Crucifixion concerning his Death, prayeth to the Father to glorify him, that he might glorify the Father, for he saith his Hour was come, (meaning the Hour of his Death) that he might give eternal Life to as many as his Father had given

given him. And then declares what is eternal Life in these Words: "And this is "Life eternal, that they might know thee "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom "thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. From whence it plainly appears, that Jesus Christ considered God the Father as the only true God.

And when Jesus healed the infirm Man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath-day, the Jews for that Reason sought to kill him, which Jesus knowing he told them, "he "could do nothing of himself, but he that "heareth [*i. e.* believeth] his Word, and "believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting Life." And then proceeds to tell them "the Hour is coming when the Dead "[*i. e. the Gentiles*] shall hear the Voice of "the Son of God, and they that hear shall "live. For as the Father hath Life in "himself, so hath he given to the Son to "have Life in himself." John v. from 18 to 27. That is, as God gave Life and Being to all Creatures, so his Doctrine shall give Life to the Gentiles, who were dead in ido-

idolatrous Worship, and Ignorance of the true God.

And that all Things were created by God alone, and not by Jesus Christ, is demonstrated by Rev. iv. 11. where our Saviour saith, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power, for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created." And in the same Book, Rev. x. 6. where the mighty Angel here mentioned, is by all Commentators understood to be our blessed Saviour, who lifted up his Hand to Heaven, and swore "by him who liveth for ever and ever, who created Heaven, and the Things that therein are, and the Earth, and the Things that therein are, and the Sea, and the Things that are therein, that there should be Time no longer."

Now if our blessed Saviour made this solemn Declaration after his Ascension into Heaven, how can it be doubted that God the Father, and not God the Son, created all Things; and consequently that he not only created the Worlds, but our blessed Redeemer.

Redeemer himself, as he is here said to have created all Things both in Heaven and Earth?

And in John the fourteenth, which hath been already quoted, the Apostle Philip having desired our Saviour to shew him the Father, our Saviour thereupon tells Philip, "That he is in the Father, and the Father in him." Which is as much as to say, that he partook of the divine Spirit of the Father, and that the Words which he spake "he spake not of himself, but the Father who dwelt in him, he did the Works; and the Word [or Doctrine] which they heard, was not his, but the Father's who sent him."

And in the same Chapter he exhorts his Apostles not to be troubled, but to rejoice at his Departure from them, because he went to his Father, and gives them this Reason for it: "For my Father is greater than I;" as you may read from the 9th to the 29th Verses of this Chapter. And that the Father is greater than the Son, appears evident from what St Paul himself saith,

faith, 1 Tim. ii. 3. and also in his Epistle to Titus, where, giving the Appellation of God to Jesus Christ, he makes a particular Distinction between God the Father and God the Son, by giving the supreme Being the Title of God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Title of God our Saviour: And St. Jude, in the last Verse of his Epistle, doth the same.

Many more Texts might be quoted, and many other Arguments advanced in Vindication of this Doctrine; but what hath been already mentioned is surely sufficient to convince any reasonable Man, that our Lord Jesus Christ did not exist before his Incarnation, notwithstanding such Part of the divine Spirit or Godhead, which God the Father was at that Time pleased to give unto him, did certainly exist from Eternity: Therefore our Saviour cannot, with any Propriety of Speech, be said to have made the Worlds, or to be the First-born of every Creature, in the literal Sense of these Words, as there is not the least Authority in Scripture to ground any such Belief upon; neither is there any Authority where-
upon

upon to ground a Belief, that a Redeemer was so much as promised before the Fall of Man. And as there is undeniable Testimony that our blessed Saviour was neither begotten nor born until the Reign of Augustus Cæsar, which was some thousand Years after the Creation, he therefore could not be co-equal with God the Father till after his Glorification; for which Reason the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds must be greatly mistaken in making us believe he was begotten before all Worlds.

Indeed the present Trinitarians may ask many Questions relative to the Subject here treated of, which they may imagine to be unanswerable; for which Reason all such Questions as at present occur, shall be fairly stated, and full and satisfactory Answers given to each of them in a few Words.

Question 1st. First they may say, if our Saviour, when in the Flesh, was not equal with God, why doth he expressly tell us, "I and my Father are one?" John x. 30.

Answer.

Answer. If it be considered what our Saviour was here speaking of, it will plainly appear, that by these Words he only meant, that his Father had given him equal Power with himself to give eternal Life to all true Believers. It cannot be understood to be spoken with Respect to his Equality with God in any other Thing, as he declares in the preceding Verse, "That his Father " who gave them to him is greater than all."

Q. 2d. Why does St Paul tell the Colossians, "In Christ dwelleth all the Fulness " of the Godhead bodily?" Col. ii. 9.

A. Because at the Time he wrote this Epistle Christ had ascended into Heaven, and had been glorified by the Father; which Glorification might be the investing the Son with the Fulness of the Godhead, as St Paul tells us the Fulness of the Godhead then dwelt in him.

Q. 3d. If Christ was not before all Worlds, why doth he say, "I am Alpha, " and Omega, the Beginning, and the End?"

Rev. i. 8 and 11. and in many other Parts of this Book.

A. Before this Book was written Christ had ascended into Heaven, and had been glorified, or as St Paul tells us, invested with the Fulness of the Godhead; therefore his Godhead must then be undoubtedly co-eternal with the Godhead of the Father, and consequently might then be justly said to be the First and the Last.

Q. 4th. Why is Christ named the second Person in the Trinity?

Because without a Redeemer, a Sanctifier had been of little avail; consequently he ought to be considered more worthy than the third Person with Respect to Man's Salvation.

Q. 5th. Why is it said in Genesis, "Let us make Man," if there was not a Trinity in the Godhead at that Time?

A. The holy Spirit certainly existed at that Time, therefore no Wonder this Fiat should

should be in the plural Number. Besides Moses might use the plural Number in this Place for the same Reason that all Princes in their Mandates do the same, to give the greater Dignity to their Commands, [or *Euphoniæ gratia*].

Q. 6th. Was not Jesus Christ begotten before all Worlds, as the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds have taught us to believe?

A. No: The Want of considering when the Apostles were giving a Description of our Saviour when in the Flesh, and when they were describing him after his Death and Glorification, appears to have led St Athanasius and the Council of Nice into that Error, as hath been fully proved in the preceding Discourse.

If the present Trinitarians want to know our Opinion concerning the holy Spirit, we shall briefly tell them our Belief is, that the holy Spirit is co-eternal with God the Father, and may exist with him after the same Manner as the Soul exists in the Body of a living Man: That he is not a distinct Person

from the Father, but executes those Offices which the Scripture tells us were appointed him to perform, by Means of certain Emanations proceeding from the supreme Being; as the Beams of the Sun, which give Light and Life to the Universe, may be said, without Impropriety, to be certain Emanations proceeding from the Body of the Sun.

Although the Tenets advanced in this Discourse deviate from the Opinions of all former Trinitarians, and from the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, they are however attended with this Satisfaction, that the mysterious Doctrine here treated of, is not only made more intelligible, but more agreeable to Scripture than any Thing of this Kind hitherto published. And as no Attempt has been made either to depreciate the Merits of Christ as our Redeemer, or to deprive him of the Honour of being God, it is to be hoped every good Man will excuse all Errors (if any are to be found) in explaining this great Mystery. Truth will always abide the severest Trial; and it was in full Confidence that the Doctrine here advanced is true, which occasioned this little Discourse to be written for the
Benefit

Benefit of Mankind: And as nothing more is designed or desired than the Discovery of Truth, therefore it shall be concluded with the following Petition, taken out of the Liturgy, "That Almighty God may so guide
 "and govern the Church of Christ by his
 "good Spirit, that all who profess and call
 "themselves Christians may be led into the
 "Way of *Truth*, and hold the Faith in
 "Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace,
 "and in Righteousness of Life." To which let every Christian say, Amen.



[The page contains faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]

1907

This image shows a blank, aged, light brown page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a textured appearance with visible creases, discoloration, and small dark spots, suggesting it is old and has been handled over time. There is no text or other markings on the page.

1875



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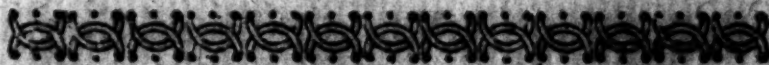
Candid Enquiry

Into the DOCTRINES of

PREDESTINATION

AND

ELECTION.



BRITISH

THE following is a list of the names of the persons who have been elected to the office of Justice of the Peace for the year 1900, in the several townships of the County of Franklin, New Hampshire.

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1871

P R E F A C E.

TH E following Treatise was never intended for the Press, being written about five Years ago, with no other Intent but the Perusal and Reformation of several of my Neighbours, who had been taught by some Methodist Ministers to believe the absurd and dangerous Doctrine of Predestination and Election. But having lately re-considered the Subject more at Leisure, I have resolved to publish it, in Hopes it may be of more general Benefit to many Fellow Christians; and for that Reason alone I think it my Duty to do so.

As I have been obliged in the Execution of this Work to explain several mysterious Texts of Scripture, in a Manner which no Author (I know of) ever attempted, I hope my Readers will be so candid as to consider the Difficulties a Layman must be under

under in executing such an arduous Task, and will also be so good as pardon any little Faults, either in Stile or Sentiment, as my sole Aim was Brevity, and the Discovery of Truth.

I should be exceeding sorry to be the Propagator of Falshood in the minutest Matter, but more particularly in an Affair of such great Importance as an Article of Faith, embraced by any Sect of Christians whatsoever. For which Reason, I humbly request my learned Readers carefully to examine my Expositions by those Passages in Scripture they allude to, that they may be enabled to form an impartial Judgment whether they are true or false. And if any of them will be so kind as inform me wherein I have essentially erred, it shall be esteemed a particular Favour done to

Their most humble Servant,

MIDDLEHAM,
Oct. 7. 1767.

FRA. CROSFIELD.

A
CANDID ENQUIRY
Into the DOCTRINES of
Predestination and Election.

IT hath in all Ages of Christianity been looked upon as one of the greatest Misfortunes which attend the Christian Religion, that Heresies and Schisms have, from Time to Time, been invented and industriously propagated amongst its Professors; by which Means many well-designing Persons have been drawn into the Belief of Opinions greatly derogating from the Honour and Glory of God, and consequently very hazardous to their own Salvation.

And surely no Heresy already propagated appears to be of so dangerous a Tendency as the Doctrine held by the Predestinarians, that God hath predestinated all Men to everlasting Happiness or Misery, before they come into the World.

THE

The Man who believes this, can never believe that God is either just, merciful, or good, if he created Beings which he had afore predestinated to eternal Perdition: Or how can he be said to act with Wisdom, in sending his only Son to bear the most cruel Treatment, and the most ignominious Death, for the Sins of Men he had already predestinated to eternal Happiness, or Misery?

Besides, is not this Doctrine inconsistent with all these Promises of Rewards which God himself hath assured us he will give to all those who believe in him, and observe his Laws? And also inconsistent with these Punishments threatened to be inflicted upon us for Unbelief and Disobedience?

The Predestinarian can never think the Observance or Breach of these Laws of any Benefit or Disadvantage to him: For must not every Predestinarian argue with himself in this Manner: I am predestinated to everlasting Happiness or Misery; therefore why should I not indulge all the Appetites of my corrupt

corrupt Nature, and commit all Manner of Wickedness with Greediness, since it will be neither better nor worse for me by so doing?

Indeed it must be confessed, that the Predestinarians, to give some Colour or Shew of Religion to their Tenets, say, that God is the Sovereign of the Universe, and as such, hath a Right as well as Power to doom his Creatures to eternal Happiness, or Destruction: And also that Jesus Christ was sent into the World to redeem Sinners, but deny he was sent to redeem any Sinners but such only as God had predestinated to eternal Happiness, and that all others are without the Benefit of Redemption.

What Sort of Sophistry this is, the weakest Understanding may readily discern. In the first Place their Contemplations are so taken up with the Sovereignty and Power of God, that they lose Sight of all his other Attributes, and never consider the supreme Being as a God of Wisdom, Mercy, Justice, and Goodness. They likewise never consider, that if their Doctrine be true, neither

Prayers, Repentance, Faith, good Works, or any other Christian Duty, nor even the Sufferings of our blessed Saviour, are of any Avail, notwithstanding the Holy Scriptures abound with great Numbers of Instances that God sent his Son into the World to save Sinners, and that he doth not desire the Death of a Sinner, but would have all Sinners to repent, and be saved. And we believe, if the Predestinarians were asked why God sent his Son into the World to suffer Death for the Offences of those whom he had before predestinated to eternal Happiness, or why he enjoined us to make Use of Faith, Prayer, Repentance, and good Works, they would not be able to give a rational Answer thereto consistent with their Creed.

But although we believe this Doctrine of the Predestinarians to be not only very absurd, but prodigiously impious, and a most horrid Blasphemy, by making our divine Creator the Worker of Wickedness, and Author of Evil; yet we are not such Enemies to Predestination as to believe there is no such Thing: On the contrary, we believe
 God

God hath predestinated many Things; and that many Men should come into the World to execute his Will, for particular Ends and Purposes; for Instance, we believe God predestinated all true Believers to inherit eternal Happiness: That there shall be a Resurrection of the Body after Death, and a Day when our Lord Jesus Christ shall descend from Heaven to judge all Mankind: That the Gentiles shall be called, and that the rebellious Jews shall be restored to Favour: That the Prophets and Apostles were predestinated or elected to be the Instructors of Mankind: That our blessed Saviour should be born of the Seed of Jacob, and not of the Seed of Esau his elder Brother. And there are many other Instances in Scripture whereby it appears that God hath predestinated or chosen particular Persons to execute his Will and Pleasure for particular Ends and Purposes, but these are no Evidences of the Predestination here condemned.

As the Advocates for the Predestination here opposed, are unable to vindicate their Doctrine by the Strength of Reason and Ar-

gnment, they betake themselves to the shameful Subterfuge of handling the Word of God deceitfully, and make no Conscience of wresting the sacred Writings from their obvious and natural Meaning, by putting forced Constructions and improbable *Inuendoes* upon several Texts, in order to support their erroneous Opinions; and rather than give up their favourite and mistaken Tenets, attempt to destroy all Religion, both Christian and Moral.

Therefore the principal Business of this Work is to undeceive those deluded People, and to conduct them from Error and Falshood to the Paths of Reason and Truth, by expounding these Texts they build their Opinions upon, in a plain, conspicuous, and concise Manner, according to their true and genuine Interpretation, and to make them so perfectly cohere with, and agreeable to all the Rest of the holy Scriptures, that all those who are not determined to be obstinately blind, cannot fail but see their Errors.

In doing this it shall be our Business to begin with the first of these Texts to be found in the New Testament, and then proceed regularly as they follow one another, and to consider each Text separately or apart by itself.

The first Text which presents itself is,

1st. MATT. xxv. 34. *Then shall the King say to them on his right Hand, come ye blessed of my Father, take the Inheritance of the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

This is so far from being any Proof of the Predestination here condemned, that the Text can mean no more than this: That the Inheritance which God had prepared for the Blessed, i. e. true Believers, or such who had done their Duty to God, was prepared for them from the Foundation of the World. And our blessed Saviour, in the Verses following, gives these Reasons why they should inherit that Kingdom, viz. Be-
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cause

cause they had done those good Works to his Brethren he there particularly mentioneth,

2d. JOHN xiii. 18. *I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: But it is, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth Bread with me bath lift up his Heel against me.*

In the foregoing Verses our Saviour is recommending Obedience and Humility to his Disciples, and tells them they should not be so proud as to think themselves greater than their Master. And then tells them, he did not speak of, or concerning them all; he knew whom he had chosen: That is, he knew he had chosen them all; but at the same Time he knew that one of them should not only disobey him, but betray him, that the Prophecy of David might be fulfilled. Psalm xli. 9. This can only prove the Predestination or Election of our Saviour's Disciples, which, it is to be hoped, no Body will deny; and that Judas was predestinated to betray him: Perhaps to shew Mankind, that though they are called by, and hearken unto the Voice of the holy Spirit, never-

nevertheless without due Care and Vigilance, they are liable to be seduced by the Enemy of Mankind; and perhaps, particularly to put us upon our Guard against the inordinate Love of Money, which the Scripture tells us is the Root of all Evil.

3d. ACTS xiii. 48. *And when the Gentiles heard it they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained unto eternal Life believed.*

The latter Part of this Verse happeneth to be falsely translated, by putting the Ordination before the Faith of the Gentiles: For in the Greek Testament, which is the Language in which it was first written, the last Part of this Verse runs thus: "And as many as believed were ordained unto eternal Life." Which true Translation makes this Text exactly agreeable to all the Rest of the holy Scriptures.

4th. ACTS xxii. 14. *And he said, the God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his Will, and shouldest*

*shouldest see that just one, and shouldest
hear the Voice of his Mouth.*

In this Chapter St Paul is giving the Jews the Reason of his Faith and Conversion, by telling them the wonderful Things which happened unto him in his Journey to Damascus, when he was going thither to persecute the Christians: How he was struck blind upon the Road, and restored to Sight by Ananias; who told him God had appointed him to know his Will, and to see Christ, and to hear his Voice. This proveth that St Paul was either predestinated or elected by God to be one of our Saviour's Apostles, which every Man must believe all the Apostles were; but is not the least Evidence that all Men are predestinated to eternal Happiness or Misery from Eternity.

5th. ROMANS viii. 29 and 30. *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the First-born among many Brethren.*

Moreover

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them also he called, and whom he called, them also he justified, and whom he justified, them also he glorified.

As these Verses are the great Bulwark of the Predestinarians, it will not be amiss before the true Meaning thereof is explained, to examine the Doctrine which St Paul was teaching the Romans in this and the foregoing Chapter.

In the preceding Chapter St Paul tells the Romans, that notwithstanding the Law is holy, just, and good, yet by Reason of the Corruption of human Nature, he was not able to keep it. But in the Beginning of this Chapter, he assures the Romans, "There is no Condemnation to them which are in Christ, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit." That is to say, they who have a lively Faith in Christ, and obey the Admonitions of the Spirit, by refusing to be governed by their carnal Affections, shall not be condemned by the Law. And in the 2d and 3d Verses, he instanceth

stanceth his own Case as an Evidence thereof, telling them, "That his Observance of
 " the Law of the Spirit hath freed him from
 " Sin and Death. For what the Law could
 " not do, Christ performed for him." And
 in Verse the 14th he assures them, " That
 " as many as are led by the Spirit of God
 " are the Sons of God." And in Verse the
 15th, to encourage them the more to believe and practise this Doctrine, he tells them,
 " That they have received the Spirit of
 " Adoption." Which is, that notwithstanding the Jews were the People whom God
 had first chosen, and to whom alone he had
 till then thought proper to make himself
 known, and given Laws for their Obedience;
 yet God had now rejected the Jews, and
 had adopted the Romans, and all other Gentile Nations, to be his Children by their
 Faith in Christ Jesus.

In the 16th and 17th Verses are these Words:

V. 16. *The Spirit itself bearing Witness
 with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God.*

V. 17.

V. 17. *And if Children, then Heirs;
Heirs with God, and joint Heirs with
Christ: If so be we suffer with him,
that we may be also glorified together.*

Observe that the Apostle in these Verses tells the Romans, that the holy Spirit beareth Witness with their Spirit, or Minds, that they are the Children of God; which is, that God had adopted them, and all the Gentile Nations, to be his Children by their Faith in Christ; and their Hearts, Minds, or Spirits accorded or witnessed with the holy Spirit, that they were so adopted, or become true Believers; and for such Faith, they should be Children of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, provided they suffered not any Temptations, Afflictions, or Persecutions, to eradicate or subvert their Faith; and for their Perseverance in their Faith, they should receive great and glorious Rewards with Christ in Heaven.

The Apostle having now shewed the Romans that they were the adopted Children of God, and the great Benefit of having a lively Faith

Faith in Christ; he instructs them in the next Place in the Belief of the Resurrection of the Body, from the 18th to the 23d Verses. And in the 23d Verse tells the Romans, that the Apostles, and all true Believers, wait for the Resurrection of the Body: That is, expect and believe in the Resurrection of the Body. The Verse runs as followeth:

V. 23. *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first Fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.*

V. 24. *For we are saved by Hope.*

And the Apostle, to enforce the Belief of the Resurrection of the Body, gives this Reason, "For we are saved by Hope." Which is to the same Purport as if he had said, Since we are saved by Faith or Hope in Jesus Christ, whose Body was raised from the Dead, why should we not believe our Bodies will also be raised from the Dead?

He

He then explains the Nature of Faith, or Hope; for Hope always implies Faith. And then the Apostle proceeds to shew the Romans the good Offices done to Mankind by the holy Spirit; as in

V. 26. *Likewise the holy Spirit helpeth our Infirmities: For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: But the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered.*

That is, the holy Spirit, by his Calls or Admonitions, not only helpeth the Infirmities of our corrupt Nature, by inspiring us with all good Thoughts, as Faith, Prayer, Repentance, and the Observance of all moral Duties; but intercedes with God for us, in the most moving Manner, to pardon all our Transgressions.

V. 27. *And he that searcheth the Heart, knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit, because he maketh Intercession for the Saints according to the Will of God.*

That is, God, who knoweth the Corruption of human Nature, and all our Transgressions, also knoweth the Mind or Desire of the holy Spirit; that he should pardon them, for this Reason, Because the holy Spirit intercedes with God for the Saints, i.e. all true Believers, (or those the Firmness of whose Faith hath stood the Proof of Persecutions, or other Temptations); that God would please to pardon their Transgressions, according to his divine Will or Pleasure; and that they may always remain stedfast in their Faith; and that he would not take his holy Spirit from them.

V. 28. And we know that all Things work together for Good, to them that love God, to them that are the Called according to his Purpose.

And in this Verse the Apostle tells the Romans that all Things work together for Good, to them that love God: That is, the Intercessions of the holy Spirit never fail to prevail with God for the Good of them that love God: That is, all such as believe

believe in him, and obey the Calls of the Spirit, and are diligent in the Performance of all those Precepts which God hath commanded to be observed, which Persons are the Called according to his Purpose; for his Will and Pleasure is, that all Men should not only hearken to, but also obey his Voice, and be saved.

The Apostle having, in the preceding Verses, exhorted the Romans to believe in the Resurrection of the Dead, and also in the great and glorious Rewards all true Believers should enjoy after Death; and likewise told them the great Goodness of God, in calling them and all Mankind, by his holy Spirit, to a lively Faith, and Obedience to his Laws: Then, in order to enforce that Doctrine in the strongest Manner, he in the next Verse gives them further, and, if possible, greater Assurances of the blessed Fruits and happy Effects of such Faith and Obedience, by telling them, that God had predestinated or ordained that all Men, after Death, should rise again (with their Bodies) and that all true Believers should be conformed to the Image of his Son, who was

C 2

glorified

glorified in Heaven by his Father. The Verse runs thus:

V. 29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the First-born among many Brethren.

That is; for God, who foreknew all the Race of Men that should come into the World, predestinated that all Men should, after Death, rise again (with their Bodies) as Jesus Christ had done; and that as many as had hearkened to the Calls of the Spirit, and were obedient to the Will of God, as Christ was, should be glorified, and enjoy everlasting Felicity with him in Heaven. And the Apostle gives this Reason for it, "That Christ, who was obedient to the Will of God, and the first who arose from the Dead with his Body, and was glorified by the Father, might be the First-born amongst many Brethren."

Therefore nothing can be more plain and self-evident, that the Predestination the Apostle was here speaking of, was only the Pre-

Predestination of the Resurrection from the Dead, and the Happiness ordained for all true Believers after the Resurrection; and not that wicked and absurd Predestination, so highly reflecting upon the Goodness, Justice, and Mercy of the Supreme Being, which the Predestinarians would have it to be.

In the next Verse the Apostle, with great Energy and Rapidity of Expression, endeavours further to inculcate this Doctrine by a short Repetition of what he had before been saying, viz.

V. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them also he justified; and whom he justified, them also he glorified.*

That is, God, who by his Prescience knew all Men that should come into the World, predestinated all Men should rise from the Dead, to the Intent they might be conformed to the Image of his Son, as in Verse 29; and also called them according to his Purpose, as in Verse the 48th; to try

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which

which of them would obey his Voice, as in Verses 11 and 14; that they might be Brethren of Christ, and Heirs of God, as in the 16th and 17th Verses; and which of them would live after the Flesh, as in the 8th, 9th, and many other Verses in this Chapter; and as many as did attend unto the Calls of the Spirit, i. e. were true Believers, should be justified by the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, as in Verses the 2d, 3d, 4th, &c. and that those who were so justified, should also be glorified with Christ, as in Verse the 17th; that is, be rewarded with Crowns of eternal Glory with Christ in Heaven.

Therefore these two Verses, upon which the Predestinarians lay so great a Stress, appear to be no more than the Doctrine of the Predestination of the Resurrection of the Dead; and a brief Recapitulation of the other Doctrines the Apostle was teaching the Romans in this Chapter, as hath already been observed; doubtless with Intent, that his Instructions might make the deeper Impression upon their Memory; and is no Contradiction of his former Doctrines, as the

the Predestinarians would make it. And as a Confirmation thereof, in the 32d Verse he assures them, "That Christ died for us all."

The Apostle further to convince the Romans of the Truth of these Things he had written unto them, in the very next Verse propounds the two following Questions, and in the Verse following solves them by the strongest Evidence.

V. 31. *What shall we then say to these Things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

By the first Question doubtless the Apostle means those wonderful Things of the Resurrection of the Dead, the Calls of the holy Spirit, and the eternal Rewards promised to all true Believers: Which Doctrines, it is probable, would appear at first very strange and incredible to the Gentiles, and many of the Romans might be under great Difficulties in believing them. But to convince them of these Truths, and likewise of the great Goodness of God towards them,

them, he in the same Verse asks them the following Question: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" That is, if God, who is Almighty, hath done those marvellous Things for us, who can gainsay it? As many of the Jews, and especially the Sadducees, did. But to convince them of the Truth of these Doctrines, and to shew them that God had done much more gracious and wonderful Things than those for them, he tells them in the next Verse,

V. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all Things?

Which is, that as God had sent his only Son to suffer Death for the Sins of all Men, and to fulfil the Law for us, and had raised him from the Dead; why should they disbelieve that God would call them to Faith and Holiness by his holy Spirit? Or disbelieve that he would raise them from the Dead, and reward all those who attended to the Calls of the Spirit with everlasting Joy in Heaven with Christ? All which Tenets
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are exactly agreeable to the whole Gospel Dispensation.

In the next Chapter St Paul produceth many Evidences from the Old Testament of God's dealing with other Persons, in a similar Manner, as he had done with the Jews and the Gentiles: That is, by preferring the youngest to the eldest, in order to confirm the Romans in the Truth of his Doctrine, that God had predestinated or directed the Gentiles to be called, and had rejected the Jews, who were his first chosen, and first beloved People. In which Chapter are many Verses which the Predestinarians would gladly interpret in favour of their Opinions.

Three of which Verses are as followeth:

V. 6. *They are not all Israel which are of Israel.*

V. 7. *Neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children: But in Isaac shall thy Seed be called.*

V. 8.

V. 8. *That is, they which are the Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of God: But the Children of the Promise are counted for the Seed.*

From the 6th and 7th Verses above recited, the Predestinarians would insist that some of the Jews were predestinated from Eternity to everlasting Happiness, and some to everlasting Misery. But the true Meaning of these Verses is explained by St Paul himself, in quite a different Manner, in the 8th Verse, by telling the Romans, "That they which are the Children of the Flesh, are not the Children of God: But that the Children of Promise shall be counted for the Seed."

Which is, that the Israelites, or Jews, though the first chosen and first beloved People of God, who are here stiled by the Apostle the Children of the Flesh, or Children who followed their own carnal Lusts and Appetites, were not to be any longer accounted the Children of God; but that the

Children of the Promise, or the Gentiles, whom God had promised to call, and had then called, should be counted for the Seed. Signifying, that after they were called, the Seeds of true Religion should spring up, and flourish amongst them, and not amongst the Jews.

Which Doctrine the Apostle illustrates by the Example of *Ishmael*, the eldest Son of *Abraham*, by Hagar his Concubine, who was born after the Flesh; and *Isaac* the younger Son of Abraham, by Sarah his Wife, who was the Child of Promise, or the Child which God had promised him should be counted for the Seed, that is, from whose Seed the Almighty chose the Messiah should be born.

St Paul, in the 11th Verse of this Chapter, gives another Instance of the like Nature in Esau and Jacob, and tells the Romans it was appointed by God that the Elder should serve the Younger, that the Purpose of God, according to Election, might stand, to shew the Romans that God had Power to elect or choose whomsoever he pleased

pleased to execute his Will for such Purposes as he had ordained. For God having promised Abraham that the Messiah should be born of his Seed, he preferred the Issue of Jacob the younger Son, before the Issue of Esau his elder Brother, for that Purpose.

But lest the Romans should imagine that God was unjust in his Dealings, either towards Ishmael or Esau, or towards the Jews, whom he had rejected, St Paul asketh them this Question: "Is there Unrighteousness with God?" And then gives them this short and pathetic Answer, "God forbid."

Undoubtedly this Manner of Reasoning is made Use of by the Apostle as the strongest Conviction that there is no Unrighteousness with God; for which Reason he might think it unnecessary to enlarge upon it. But as it may be justly presumed that the Romans, who then were, or had very lately been gross Idolators, had at that Time a very faint Idea of the Attributes of the true God; the Apostle therefore immediately proceeds to inspire them with just Sentiments of the great Power and Sovereignty of the supreme Being,

Creatures, the Apostle relates the Manner
 of God's dealing with Pharaoh, who was
 not only an Infidel and Idolater, but also an
 Encourager of diabolical Magic, and the In-
 vocation of Devils. And although St Paul
 does not here acquaint the Romans with the
 Cause of the Displeasure of the Almighty
 against Pharaoh, yet he tells them that God
 hardened Pharaoh's Heart; that is, took his
 holy Spirit from him, and left him to be go-
 verned by his own vain Imaginations, that he
 might continue in his Wickedness, and give
 just Occasion for the Almighty to demon-
 strate his Power by taking Vengeance upon
 him, that all Men, but more especially the
 Israelites, might be deterred, by Pharaoh's
 Example, from committing Wickedness for
 the Future.

In the next Verse the Apostle quotes Ex-
 odus ix. 16. where it is said, " Even for
 " that Purpose have I raised thee up, [or as
 " the Hebrew Text has it, made thee to
 " stand, or preserved thee] that I might
 " shew my Power in thee, and that my
 " Name might be declared throughout all
 " the Earth." Which is, that God did not
 punish

punish Pharaoh with immediate Death for the many great Offences he had committed, but preserved him, although he persevered in his Wickedness, till such Time as he thought proper to take Vengeance upon him, that by the exemplary Punishments to be inflicted upon him, the whole World might be made sensible of the Power of the Almighty to punish the Wicked.

From which different Dealings of God with Pharaoh and the Israelites, the Apostle, more fully to convince the Romans of the Sovereignty and great Power of the Almighty, draws this Conclusion: "That God will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth."

And in the following Verse the Apostle hath these Words: "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find Fault? For who hath resisted his Will?"

Some People may explain this Verse after the following Manner: That the Romans (being then ignorant of the Manner of God's dealing with Mankind, and also ignorant

of the Sins of Infidelity and Idolatry, and above all the horrible Sin of invoking and worshipping Demons, which Pharaoh was guilty of before God hardened his Heart) might say, If God is all-powerful and merciful, why did he not pardon Pharaoh, and not make him an Example of his Power, by destroying him? Which certainly cannot be just in God, as no Man can resist his Will.

But as the Apostle was treating of the Calling of the Gentiles, and the Rejection of the Jews, it is rather to be apprehended the Apostle imagined the Romans would find Fault with the Justice of God for rejecting the Israelites, who were his beloved People, and might say, It would have been more just and merciful in the omnipotent Sovereign of the Universe to have continued them still in his Favour, rather than reject them, as it is impossible to resist his Will.

It is to be observed, that notwithstanding St Paul believed the Doctrine he was teaching might induce the Romans to find Fault with the Justice of God, yet he did not think

think proper to acquaint them, that it was the great Wickedness of Pharaoh which provoked God to harden his Heart, and punish him; or that it was the Idolatry and Rebellion of the Israelites which provoked the Almighty to reject them; apprehending (as it may be presumed) that if he acquainted them with those Facts, they might be dejected upon Account of their own Wickedness, and consequently be intimidated from embracing the Christian Faith, as they were Infidels and Idolaters as well as Pharaoh and the Jews; and therefore might have Reason to believe, that God could not intend to call them, as they were guilty of the same Crimes for which he rejected the Jews. And St Paul, in his Answer to the Questions he propounded, is still silent as to these Facts, judging it more prudent to continue further to enforce the Belief of the Supremacy, Power, and Mercy of the Almighty, rather than to demonstrate the Justice of God, by disclosing the Wickedness of Pharaoh and the Israelites. His Answer is in the following Words:

Nay, but O Man, who art thou that
 repliest against God? Shall the Thing
 formed say to him that formed it, Why
 hast thou made me thus? Hath not the
 Potter Power over the Clay, of the same
 Lump to make one Vessel unto Honour,
 and another unto Dishonour? What if
 God, willing to shew his Wrath, and
 to make his Power known, endured with
 much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath
 fitted to Destruction: And that he might
 make known the Riches of his Glory on
 the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore
 prepared unto Glory? Even us whom
 he hath called, not of the Jews only, but
 also of the Gentiles."

By this Answer St Paul gives the Romans
 to understand, that it was great Presumption,
 if not great Wickedness in Man, to find
 Fault with what God thinks proper to do:
 Or in other Words, to call in Question his
 Reasons for acting according to his Will.
 That as God is the Creator of us all, he
 hath a Right to dispose of all Events that
 shall

shall befall us, when and in what Manner he pleaseth, which he illustrates by the Similitude of the Potter and his Clay; and then demonstrates it to be no Injustice in God to shew his Wrath against wicked Pharaoh, or against such of the Jews who were Unbelievers, Idolaters, and Rebellious, whom the Apostle here stiles Vessels fitted for Destruction, for their Obstinacy in refusing to believe in him, and wilfully rejecting his Commands, after he had with great Patience and Long-suffering wrought a great Number of Miracles, to convince them he was their true and only God, in whom they should believe, and in whom alone they ought to confide.

And on the other Hand, that it was no Injustice in God to display the Riches of his Glory (or Power) on the Gentiles, whom the Apostle here stiles the Vessels of Mercy, which God had afore prepared unto Glory, (or prepared to receive the Light of the Gospel) notwithstanding God had not till then made himself manifest to the Gentiles, as he had done to the Jews: And that though they were not able to assign the

Reasons

Reasons why God did reject the Jews, or why he did not make himself manifest to the Gentiles sooner, yet it was great Presumption or Wickedness in them to call in Question the Justice of God concerning it, as they could not enter into the Counsels of the Almighty, and as the Creator had as good a Right to dispose of all Events which should befall his Creatures, and to direct how and when they should happen, as the Potter had to dispose of his Clay.

And in the 24th Verse the Apostle tells the Romans, "That some of the Jews were called, as well as the Gentiles;" meaning thereby that it was the Infidelity and Rebellion of the Jews, which made God reject the Rest. And in the 29th Verse he tells them, that some of the Prophets had foretold the Calling of some of the Jews, and that if some of them had not been called, the whole Race of the Jews had been like Sodom and Gomorrah.

How the Predestinarians can prove their Doctrine, that God predestinated all Men to eternal Happiness or Misery before the Creation

Creation of the World, from all or any Part of this Chapter, cannot be comprehended, though they quote many Verses in this Chapter to support their Opinions. Indeed it appears by this Epistle of St Paul, that God predestinated the Calling of the Gentiles, and that the Jews knew the Gentiles would be called: But it is evident St Paul never intended to advance the Doctrine the Predestinarians now hold, by what he says to the Romans in the 11th Chapter of this Epistle, and the 13th and 14th Verses, wherein he tells them, "That, "being the Apostle of the Gentiles, he "magnified his Office, with Intent that if "by any Means he might provoke to Emu-
 "lation them that were his Flesh, [that is, "the Jews] and might save some of them." From which Expressions it plainly appears, neither St Paul himself believed, or ever intended to make the Romans believe, such a Predestination as is here opposed; otherwise he could have no Hopes of saving any of the rebellious Jews, by provoking them with his Doctrine to emulate or excel the Gentiles in their Faith, as by such an Emula-
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tion it would have been impossible for them to obtain their Salvation.

There only remains now one Text more to be explained, which the Predestinarians lay any great Stress upon, which is the 3d, 4th, and 5th Verses of the first Chapter of St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.

EPH. i. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places [or Things] in Christ.*

Note. The Words in the Original are, *in caelis in regionibus*, which signifies in heavenly Things, as noted in the Margin of some Bibles, and not *in regionibus*, which signifies heavenly Places.

It is to be observed this Epistle was addressed to the Saints at Ephesus, and to the Faithful in Christ Jesus. By the Saints, it is apprehended, the Apostle means those Ephesians who had patiently suffered Persecution for their Faith in Christ; and by the Faithful
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in Christ Jesus, he means all true Believers, or all such amongst the Ephesians who had received the Christian Faith; and by blessing God for blessing them with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Things in Christ, he means they ought to bless God for calling them by his holy Spirit to a lively Faith in Christ, which will procure them eternal Happiness in Heaven with Christ.

V. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love.*

V. 5. *Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will.*

In these two Verses the Apostle assigns his Reasons for their blessing of God; that is to say, because God had chosen the Ephesians, who were Gentiles, to receive the Christian Faith, instead of the Jews, and had predestinated or ordained them to be his Children by Adoption,
for

for Adoption always implies the Rejection of the eldest, and the choosing of some other Person to inherit. So that it plainly appears the Predestination the Apostle here mentioneth, is no other than the Predestination of the Ephesians, amongst the Rest of the Gentiles, to be called to receive the Christian Faith, according to the Pleasure of God's Will or Purpose; which needs no other Comment than the Apostle's own Explanation in the following Verses of this Chapter, and the Rest of this Epistle to the Ephesians.

What hath already been said, it is hoped, may sufficiently demonstrate from Scripture that God never intended such a Predestination as is here opposed; and in particular, that St Paul means no more by the Predestination he taught, than the Predestination of the Calling of the Gentiles, after our Lord and Saviour made his Appearance upon Earth, and the Predestination of the Resurrection of the Dead, and that all true Believers are predestinated to eternal Happiness.

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Our blessed Saviour tells us every Tree is known by its Fruit, and the same Thing may be said of every Exposition of the Scriptures; for if any Text in Scripture is so expounded as to destroy any of the Attributes of God, or contradict the Redemption of all Men by our Lord Jesus Christ, or tend to make Morality no Christian Duty, such Exposition must undoubtedly be false, all which the Doctrine of the Predestination here opposed certainly does: For if God hath predestinated some Men from Eternity to everlasting Perdition, how can God be either just, merciful, loving, or good to those his unhappy Creatures? Or why did he send his Son to suffer Death for the Sins of the World, if his Death and Sufferings could be of no Avail? Or why did he command us to perform all moral Duties, if our State in the next World is neither to be better nor worse for the Observance or Neglect of his Precepts?

A great many more Arguments might be advanced to elucidate the Propriety of the Method here taken of expounding those

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Texts

Texts of Scripture here quoted relating to Predestination; but it is to be hoped enough hath already been said to convince the Predestinarians of their Errors, and to acquit the Apostle St Paul from the ignominious Imputation of aspersing the Justice, Mercy, and Goodness of our great Creator; a Crime which appears to be very foreign to the Apostle's Intentions. For how can it be imagined that any of the Apostles or Prophets, who were all inspired with the Spirit of God, should ever teach Mankind to blaspheme God?

LITTLE having hitherto been said concerning ELECTION, or the ELECT, Words frequently mentioned in the New Testament, about which there is great Reason to believe the Predestinarians and Electionists have conceived erroneous Opinions; the subsequent Part of this Discourse shall therefore be chiefly confined to a full and natural Explanation of these Words, in as brief a Manner as possible.

It hath already been observed, that God predestinated all true Believers to eternal
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Happiness: For which Reason all true Believers are in the sacred Writings frequently called the Elect, or such whom God hath chosen to inherit eternal Happiness: And they obtain that Title, not from any Right they have thereto by any particular Election or Choice made by God of each Individual, peculiarly relative to each Individual alone, but from God's general Predestination that all true Believers should be saved; that is to say, from the Consequences of God's general Predestination, and the Effect of our Faith or Belief.

This is evident from what the Prophet *Ezekiel* teacheth through all his eighteenth Chapter, and also from what St Peter saith, Acts x. 34 and 35. "Then Peter opened his Mouth, and said, Of a Truth I perceive that God is no Respector of Persons: But in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him." And in the 42d and 43d Verses of the same Chapter he also saith: "And he commanded us to preach unto the People, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of

“ Quick and Dead. To him give all the
 “ Prophets Witness, that through his Name
 “ whosoever believeth in him, shall receive
 “ Remission of Sins.” And St Matthew in
 the 18th Chapter, and 10th Verse, and St
 John in the 3d Chapter, from the 15th to
 the 22d Verses, testify the same.

This Doctrine of the Electionists is also
 contrary to Reason, to the Attributes of
 God, and the Redemption of Man by our
 Lord Jesus Christ; for St Paul tells us,
 “ As in Adam all die, [or become subject to
 “ Condemnation] so in Christ shall all be
 “ made alive;” [*i. e.* Partakers of Redemp-
 tion through Christ.] And if this had not
 been so, our Redemption would have been
 a partial and imperfect Redemption.

A new Covenant was made with Man
 upon the Fall of our first Parents, and God
 on his Part sent a Redeemer for all Mankind.
 And is nothing to be done on our Parts?
 Yes, surely: We are to believe in him, and
 endeavour to do all those good Works he hath
 commanded. But if God from Eternity hath
 elected a certain Number of Men to eternal
 Happi-

Happiness; and consigned the Rest to eternal Misery, what Occasion is there for Faith or good Works? Or how could such Election be consistent with the Attributes of Goodness, Justice, and Mercy of God? Or consistent with the Scripture Doctrine, that Christ died for all Men? Unless it be acknowledged, that if we break the Condition of that Covenant on our Parts, we thereby forfeit our Title to that Inheritance which our benign Creator had prepared for us.

Indeed it may be asked, Who are true Believers? And how true Believers come by their Faith?

In Answer to which Questions, it may with Justice be said, that all Persons are true Believers who believe in ~~the~~ ^{one} supreme, omnipresent, omniscient, all-wise Being, full of infinite Goodness, Truth, Justice, and Mercy, called God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and all Things therein: That when he created our first Parents, he gave them sufficient Abilities to enable them perfectly to fulfil those sacred Laws he commanded them to keep; and to prove their

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Duty,

Duty, gave them a free Will either to observe or disobey them: That in order to enforce the Observance of these Laws, he promised eternal Life and Felicity, as a Reward for their Obedience, and that Death and Misery should attend their Disobedience: That, being seduced by the Devil, they disobeyed the Commands of their Creator, forfeited the promised Rewards, and became subject to Death: That their Disobedience did not only change their own Nature, which was before full of Uprightness, Duty, Love, and Innocence, by making their Wills and Affections depraved, and their Hearts prone to all Manner of Evil; but also *contaminated their Blood*, and entailed the same unhappy Constitution upon all their Posterity: That God, to remedy those Evils, out of his infinite Mercy to his then fallen and miserable Creatures, promised them a Redeemer: That after the Flood God made a Covenant with Abraham, and a second Promise of a Redeemer, and gave him and his Children many salutary Laws for their Observance: That our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Redeemer which God promised, by whom he also made a
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new Covenant, viz. that whosoever believed in God, and also believed in him, and in all the meritorious Things he did for us, and are diligent in obeying all those Commands he ordered to be observed, should, for the Sake of his Merits alone, and not for any Merits of their own, never be condemned, either for the *original* Sin of their first Parents, or for any actual Sin which they have committed; and that all obstinate Unbelievers shall partake of those severe Punishments denounced against them in the Gospel. The true Believer also believes in the Resurrection of the Dead, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, and that God calls all Men by his holy Spirit to Repentance, Faith, and good Works, and is diligent in making his Will and Affections obedient to these Calls, always endeavouring to manifest his Faith by the Performance of every good Work, that the holy Spirit may witness with his Spirit that he is a "Child of God;" lest he should incur those dreadful Punishments threatened to be inflicted upon the seemingly religious Hypocrite.

And

And the Way of obtaining such Faith is, by reading or hearing the holy Scriptures read, by believing them to be the Word of God, and by expounding those Passages therein which appear dark and mysterious, agreeable to the Attributes of God, and such Texts which are easy to be understood by every common Capacity, which are essential to Salvation: For we may be assured, that none of these Texts will contradict any other when rightly understood.

It may perhaps be asked, Why then are not all Men true Believers? To which may too justly be made this true and unanswerable Reply, because they either suffer the grand Enemy of Mankind to seduce them, or their Love of the Riches, Honours, or Pleasures of this World to hinder them. Our blessed Saviour tells us, many are called, (by the Word many, meaning all) but few are chosen. And he gives us the Reasons why all Men will not be true Believers, in his first Parable of the Sower, and also in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, and likewise

wise in many other Instances, which, with the Testimony of our own Consciences, it is to be hoped, are sufficient Evidences, without any further Proof.

There are many other Texts in Scripture whereby it appears, there is no particular determined Election, (except of such Persons who have been elected for particular Ends and Purposes, as the Apostles, and some others) but that God hath predestinated all true Believers to eternal Happiness. And the Method his divine Wisdom hath appointed to know who will be true Believers, or his Elect, or not, is to call all Men by his holy Spirit to Faith, and good Works; that by their Obedience to such Calls, "they may work out their own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and make their Calling and Election sure." Or otherwise, by their Disobedience, may grieve the holy Spirit, and provoke God to take his holy Spirit from them, and so become Reprobates; which, it is to be feared, many do, through the Corruption of human Nature, and their own wilful and shameful Neglect of their Duty to God.

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There are such a Multitude of Texts to disprove the Doctrine of the Predestinarians and Electionists, that it must surely be needless to mention any more of them. But it is not amiss to quote one Text, which demonstrates the great Danger of misinterpreting the Scriptures, which we would earnestly recommend to their Perusal, and most serious Attention. This Text is to be found in the third Chapter of the second Epistle general of St Peter, and the 16th Verse, where this Apostle having Occasion to mention the Epistles of St Paul, hath these Words: "As also, in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these Things; in which are some Things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction."

It is necessary further to observe, that the Predestinarians and Electionists make frequent Mention of the free Grace of God, and would make us believe it is not in the Power of Man to resist it; and therefore pretend we have no free Will over our Actions.

Actions. To prove this they quote Phil. ii. 13. "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure."

This Text is literally true, but strangely misinterpreted by the Predestinarians and Electionists, who would make us believe the Will of God here mentioned is irresistible, and that God compels us to will and to do according to his good Pleasure; the contrary whereof every Man almost daily experienceth. Whereas by the working of God here mentioned, it is plain the Apostle means no more than that God worketh in us by the holy Spirit, (not compels us) to will and to do of his good Pleasure; or in other Words, that God calls us by his holy Spirit to do all such Things as are acceptable to him. And it is evident this must be the Meaning of St Paul, for in the very Words before this Text he commands us "to work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling:" Which Texts taken together, make the Apostle's Meaning plainly this: That our Hearts, Minds, or Spirits, ought to co-operate or work together with
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the holy Spirit for the Attainment of our Salvation. And it is to be hoped these infatuated People would themselves contradict their own Doctrine, if they were asked why they make it an Article of Faith to blaspheme God. Surely they could not have the Confidence to reply, that it is the Will and good Pleasure of God which compels them; and that it is not in their Power to hinder themselves from doing so.

Besides, is not this Life, through the whole Tenure of the Scriptures, represented as a State of Warfare, Probation, and Trial? And are we not therein commanded to do all good Works, and to watch and pray, lest we enter into Temptation? And also told, "ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And doth not the Scripture also assure us, that we are to be judged by our Actions? Therefore with what Assurance can the Predestinarians and Electionists say, we have no free Will over our Actions? For if that was true, it would be neither Wisdom in God to reward us for doing our Duty to him, nor just to punish us for disobeying

obeying his Commands. And as divine Providence hath sent us here as Probationers, I should be glad to be informed how we can be understood to be Probationers, if we have no free Will.

It must be allowed, that God of his own free Grace hath done many good and great Things for us; for Instance, he sent us a Saviour to redeem us, when we were dead in Sin and Trespases; he ordered the holy Scriptures to be written for our Instruction, and he sends his holy Spirit to call us to the Observance of our Duty, and hath promised Forgiveness to the greatest Sinners upon their Repentance and Amendment of Life, &c. &c. &c. But these Things are far from making us no free Agents over our Actions, or shewing that the Will of God is irresistible.

Indeed if they were to tell us we had no free Will over our Thoughts, and that our Thoughts were introduced by the Impulse of a good or evil Spirit, we should in some Measure agree with them, and allow that all our Actions take their Rise from our
 F Thoughts.

Thoughts. For Instance, when a Thought is introduced into our Minds, such Thought excites our Passions, our Passions prompt us to act as they direct; every foolish or wicked Man pursues the Dictates of his Passions; but every prudent Man examines the Tendency of his Passions, by the Laws of God, Conscience, and Reason, before he adventures into Action; these inform his Judgment, his Judgment directs his Will, and his Will directs his Actions. It therefore plainly appears, that notwithstanding all our good and evil Actions may arise from the Impulse of a good or evil Spirit, yet it is far from proving we have no free Will over our Actions, as we often act contrary to Reason, Judgment, and Conscience.

Although there is great Reason to believe some of our Thoughts are introduced by the Means above-mentioned; because it sometimes happeneth, that when our Thoughts seem to be altogether taken up with the Contemplation of one particular Object, Thoughts entirely foreign to what we are so intent upon will suddenly arise in the Mind, which we can no otherwise
account

account for than by imputing them to the Impulse of some good or evil Spirit. Yet we believe such Thoughts are not so frequent as those Thoughts, or rather Ideas, which are formed in our Minds by Sensation and Reflection.

To conclude; we would desire our Readers to observe, that the Doctrine here advanced is entirely agreeable to the Scriptures, the Attributes of God,* the 17th Article of our Church, the Manner which God hath always dealt with the World, and the Rules of human Reason. And that the Doctrine of the Predestinarians and Electionists appears to be entirely repugnant to all these Things.

* If it be considered that God predestinated all true Believers to eternal Happiness, and that the Word ELECT, so often mentioned in the Scripture, means only true Believers, it will reconcile the 17th Article of our Church with the sacred Writings.

F I N I S.

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